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# Moving from the Present via the Past to Look toward the Future

## Jewish Life in Germany Today

In the course of my recent research I have been confronted with two seemingly contradictory phenomena; Jewish emigration *from* Germany in the 1930s and immigration *to* Germany in the 1990s.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the 1930s, Jews had to leave Germany, a country, which many of them had loved and even adored. More than 300,000 men, women, and children searched worldwide for a refuge, narrowly escaping from a regime that planned the Final Solution for all of Europe. Surprisingly, 70 years later, Germany itself has become a refuge and destination of choice for Jewish émigrés who have left the crumbling Soviet Union and its successor states. Are there any links connecting those Jews who lost their homes during the Nazi period in Germany, and those Jews who are searching for a new beginning in Germany today?

Members of the first group continue to dwell on the trauma of their hasty escape and the loss of German culture. Members of the second are entering virgin territory, left to decipher German culture and society (including veteran Jewish communities) from their own perspective as Eastern European refugees. My recent research as a German scholar from Potsdam has presented me with some exciting opportunities to travel between these different worlds, to speak with émigrés from then and now and meet Jewish migrants from all different walks of life. Initially, I was puzzled as to what those exiled German Jews and those who are expected to build a new Germany Jewry could have in common. Yet, the longer I spoke with people, the more similarities I discovered. Although on the face of it, it would seem almost impossible to bring together the Jewish expatriates from the 1930s and the Jewish arrivals in the twenty-first century, I will try to do so in the context of this chapter. Such an exercise requires careful consideration of which Jewish traditions, cultural values, religious (or secular) self-understandings and the social experiences each carries.

The first thing both groups have in common is the idea of the ‘packed suitcase.’ Not only for Jews under German Nazi rule could it be life-saving to have

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<sup>1</sup> Here I would like to take the opportunity to thank my colleague Olaf Glöckner for his valuable input and suggestions regarding current sociological studies on the integration of Russian-Jewish immigrants in Germany.

already packed one's suitcases in time. What about unpacking after emigration? How long did German Jewish refugees struggle with this quandary? How long did they harbor the idea of returning, despite the unthinkable crimes perpetrated by the Germans in the Second World War? Could Jews from the former Soviet Union have been conflicted with similar quandaries when they arrived to find refuge in Germany, at a time when Right-wing extremism was on the rise? Undoubtedly, the early 1990s were restless years in recently unified Germany, at least for newcomers from abroad.

How long did Jews in the DP camps after 1945 who were waiting to leave, but wound up staying in Germany after all, keep their suitcases packed? How about the few German Jews who survived in hiding or returned to Germany after emigrating – what about their 'suitcases'? What about those Russian Jews who came to the West after 1989, taking their first steps with unpacked suitcases in Berlin, Frankfurt, or Munich? Maintaining the suitcase metaphor – what exactly was or is in the suitcases anyway?

When German-speaking Jews left their homeland following Hitler's rise to power in 1933, along with photo albums and starched white tablecloths, their suitcases were filled with the works of Goethe, Schiller, or Eichendorff – books perceived capable of giving them a 'piece of home' far away. What did those DPs from Eastern Europe, who saw Germany only as a stopover on their way to America or Israel, but nevertheless ended up staying, having children, and at some point making homes for themselves, who still kept their suitcases packed and always in sight – what did they have in their bags? Finally, what was in those suitcases packed in Odessa, Volgograd, or Moscow to be taken along to Berlin, Frankfurt, or Munich? If there were books among their belongings, who were the authors and what were the topics?

Where do all of these people position themselves? Which identity is their own? Which sense of self defines them? What do they associate with home and what culture do they feel at home in? Is there an element that connects the estimated 200,000 to 300,000 Jews living in Germany today, of which about 110,000 are members of the Jewish community? They are the descendants of the different groups, which represent Jewish life after 1945.

The first groups are prewar German Jews – those who survived in Germany in hiding (ca. 3,000) or as a 'non-Aryan' spouse (ca. 12,000), and those who survived the concentration camps (ca. 8,000). They were augmented by former emigrants who chose to return to Germany after the war (estimated to be five percent of those Jews who fled Germany) – whether fueled by political considerations or due to homesickness. These two groups have constituted the minority of Jews in Germany since the 1950s. A much larger group was the Eastern European DPs who had survived the concentration camps, often as the only member of their

families. The majority originated from Poland and Hungary. Their traumatic experiences during the Holocaust encumbered their view of postwar Germany, exacerbating the difficulties of adjusting to a foreign country, dealing with a more or less hostile environment, and navigating a foreign language and foreign culture in daily life. Robbed of their youth, having lost their family, and often without a school education or professional training, a new beginning seemed almost hopeless, yet the will to continue to survive was unbroken despite all of the barriers and obstacles. Even the harsh criticism they faced from Jews all over the world ('How can a Jew live in the land of the perpetrators after the Holocaust?!') did not stop this first postwar generation of Eastern European DPs and those returning from exile from building lives for themselves in postwar Germany. They had children and built a Jewish community and Jewish institutions in defiance of all of the negative predictions, but what did the decision taken by the parents' generation mean for their children? The burden on the 'second generation,' that their parents' decision meant that they had to accept living in Germany, was immense for no small number of such offspring. Paul Spiegel, who served as chair of the Central Council of Jews in Germany from 2002–2006, once remarked as a representative of this second generation: "I'll admit that if I had been 25 or maybe 30 at the end of the war and not 8, I would not have returned to Germany."<sup>2</sup> It is completely understandable that many members of the second generation have an ambivalent, if not troubled relationship to Germany, the land of their childhood and therefore of their socialization. This begs the question, whether some semblance of 'a cultural home' and sense of identity of any kind whatsoever could develop within this generation. If so, is it the same for *all* groups – that is, for both the children of 'native' German Jews, as well as the offspring of immigrant Jews in Germany of Polish, Baltic, Galician, or Hungarian origin who are considered German Jewry? This question is further complicated by the fact that both groups are lumped together under *one* Central Council of the Jews in Germany – deemed to be representative of Germany Jewry.

Already in 1952, there were a hundred newly-founded Jewish communities and two newly-built synagogues (in Saarbrücken and Stuttgart) in West Germany. Community centers like the one opened in 1959 on the Fasanenstraße in Berlin, built on the site of a former synagogue, outwardly attested to the beginnings of consolidation, but this did not reflect realities, and even masked internal weaknesses. The so-called "unified community model" which places every Jewish 'denomination' from Orthodoxy to Reform in one community often offered the only chance for an organized Jewish community to continue to exist locally. The system for social welfare and senior care was expanded, a growing need as the

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2 Interview with Paul Spiegel, see: Richarz, *Leben in einem gezeichneten Land*, 2007, p. 243.

Jewish population aged, but otherwise the community remained stagnant. Establishment of a few youth centers and Jewish adult education centers could not hide the fact that demographically, decades after the Holocaust, the days of organized Jewry in Germany were, in essence, numbered. At the dedication ceremony for the community center in Frankfurt am Main, completed in 1986, the architect and later Vice chair of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Salomon Korn, claimed optimistically: “He who builds a house, wants to stay.”<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the question remained hanging in the air: Who would fill the building and how – particularly in the long term?

On closer examination, it was shown that many Jewish community members were losing interest in the Jewish religion and only fragments of Jewish tradition and culture were being handed down to the next generation. Similar to many Christian communities, attendance at worship services was limited to the High Holy Days, and religious rites were practiced more out of a sense of attachment to tradition than out of religious conviction. Only a small minority of Jews lived and continues to live in accordance to Jewish religious laws. The common denominator of ‘Jewishness’ has become the memory of Nazi persecution and the Holocaust, combating new forms of anti-semitism and racism, and a strong feeling of solidarity with Israel.

Still, some internal Jewish dissimilarities vis-à-vis religious outlook and practices continue. While the majority of German Jews before 1933 identified with the Liberal stream of Judaism and were affiliated with the Reform community, most of the newly-founded ‘unified communities’ founded after 1945 were affiliated with the Orthodox stream. This also led to conflicts within the communities, as the Orthodox standards of ritual observance were introduced by rabbis who, without exception, came from abroad. The departure of Leo Baeck, Gunther Plaunt, and other Liberal leaders with the rise of Nazism, left a void and after 1945 there were no institutions for training Liberal rabbis in Germany. Liberal streams initially viewed the Jewish life that took shape in postwar Germany with some reservation; only in the late 1990s was the prewar link to Liberal Judaism reestablished with the renewal of training for non-Orthodox rabbis in Germany – a milestone that reflected both the growing need for non-Orthodox rabbis and the growth of religious pluralism within the Germany Jewish communities.

The unification of Germany also ushered in a complete transformation of Jewish life. This does not refer to the new generation of leaders in the Jewish communities in both East and West, nor to a collective relocation of the some 400 Jews who had previously been spread out over eight Jewish communities in East Germany. Rather, it was the fall of the Iron Curtain and not the fall of the Berlin

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<sup>3</sup> See: Korn, *Geteilte Erinnerung*, 2001, p. 14.

Wall that sparked the transformation of Jewish life in Germany, leading to the migration into Germany of more than 200,000 Jews and their non-Jewish relatives from the former Soviet Union. Within a very short time, new Jewish communities sprang up in regions of Germany that previously lacked any kind of Jewish infrastructure, while in existing Jewish communities such as in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Munich, membership multiplied, and new synagogues and Jewish community centers were being built all over the country.

The influx of ‘Russian Jews’ indeed saved Judaism in Germany from demographic collapse, at least for a few decades. Consequently, it is not surprising that those Jews who had been living in Germany viewed this immigration as a great opportunity, which was also specifically welcomed by parts of the non-Jewish public. In the initial euphoria, Jewish communities had not registered that a successful integration of the newcomers would require an enormous amount of inter-cultural acceptance, a comprehensive familiarization process and mutual understanding. As we now know, the Jews from the former USSR (a significant percentage with non-Jewish spouses and dependants) came to Germany, Israel, and the United States with very different expectations and worldviews. Their level of secularization was much greater than that amongst Jews in Western and Central Europe. Many, to this day, do not see this as a real problem; rather, they define their Jewishness as an ethnic affiliation, a sense of self-definition further amplified by anti-semitism, epitomized by pronounced intellectualism coupled with heightened interest in Jewish history and philosophy, and a lifestyle marked by a mixture of Jewish and Russian culture.

During the 1990s, when the Russian Jews in Germany became a pronounced demographic majority in most local Jewish communities, many were concerned primarily with elementary questions of social integration into German society. The older immigrants often felt that they would not be able to master the German language and mostly kept to themselves out of necessity. In large cities like Berlin, however, many were able to find support and social outlets in independent networks and circles which the Berlin sociologist Judith Kessler described as a kind of “Russian colony” in the 1990s. However, the middle generation of the Russian Jews, at least those already in their forties, also frequently experienced social marginalization, primarily sparked by a major loss in professional status. Were these people – respected doctors, professors or men and women of letters in Odessa, Volgograd or Vilnius – who found themselves standing in line at the unemployment agency considered difficult to place. In addition (as was shown in *Israel Studies* as well) there were serious cultural differences from the host society that set them apart – from the preferred language, literature, music, theater, fashion to educational methods. Mutual frictions resulted. Interestingly, almost none of the Russian-Jewish immigrants felt the need to sacrifice, or even deny, their native culture to gain

faster social integration. This demonstrates a strong collective self-consciousness in general that can also be felt in the dynamics of the Jewish communities. Russian Jews also often consider themselves to be a part of a “transnational diaspora”, with kindred spirits living on at least three different continents.

With the immigration of Russian Jews to Germany, the Jewish community in Germany has not only significantly grown numerically; it has also witnessed a sharp increase in diversity. This can and should be understood as an opportunity, doing so, however, should not be taken for granted.

Is Jewish culture in Germany generating new identities? Is this question only germane regarding the inner-perspective, or is there an inherent outer perspective as well? Also, are we only talking about members of the Jewish communities, or even perhaps, only those who keep Jewish law? Or does the question also relate to unaffiliated Jews who do not belong to a community? Is the ‘new identities’ question germane for all those with a Jewish background, regardless whether they are religious, non-religious or indifferent?

In any case, we have seen a growing religious, as well as cultural, differentiation within the Jewish communities in Germany since the late 1990s, without the unified community model seriously being called into question. Having said that, today there are a number of independent Liberal communities, once again the beginnings of Conservative Judaism (*Masorti* – mainly in Berlin), and there are even dynamic innovations on the observant Orthodox side – albeit in the form of rather small communities. More secular-oriented Jews are building networks in Jewish cultural and educational associations, theater and music festivals, and sometimes in political initiatives and projects, as well. There are Russian Jews along with local Jews in all of these groups, as well. Today, two decades after the advent of large-scale Russian-Jewish immigration, questions of collective and individual identity, positioning of self, and cultural orientation have once again significantly grown in importance. If we allow ourselves a look back in history, by comparison we encounter the startling fact that Germany’s Jews who fled their country during the 1930s, also, in effect, took their German-Jewish heritage with them.

Russian Jews experienced a gradual, systematic destruction of their institutions and traditions over the course of seventy years of Soviet dictatorship. Shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution, Hebrew was forbidden; Stalin largely destroyed Yiddish culture. In the last few decades of the Soviet Union, religious community life was limited to a few synagogues; also in this regard, Gorbachev’s liberalization came too late. Nevertheless, many Jews from the Soviet Union did not forget or negate their Jewishness. The second generation of Jews from the former Soviet Union must now decide how they will handle their heritage in the long run, and this decision will have a crucial impact on Jewish life in Germany. However, it seems unlikely that the Russian Jews in Germany will look to connect to local tradition as

found, for example, in the works of Moses Mendelssohn, Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, or Bertha Pappenheim. This raises a fascinating question: To what extent will the second generation of Russian Jews develop a common cultural and/or religious identity with the children of Jews who have been living in Germany longer, and what role can descendants of ‘indigenous’ German Jews still remaining in Germany (the *Yeckes*) be expected to play in the future? Where will the continuities emerge in the Jewish religion, and if any, what will be their preferences? What kind of identity do Jewish communities develop when faced with a growing number of secular members? Where can secular Jews ‘connect’ outside of the communities? These questions are axiomatic when contemplating the positioning of Jews in Germany, their identities (and possible changes in identity), and what they attribute to themselves as Jews and what is ascribed to them as Jews by others.

No discussion of the diverse fabric of German Jewry would be complete without mentioning the surprising and growing number of Israelis living in Germany either long-term or permanently. Today, there are an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 Israelis living in Berlin alone. Berlin has become a magnet for young people from Israel since German unification, by no means just for students, but increasingly for artists, businesspeople, academics, and others, as well. All of these groups, the ‘locals,’ the DPs, the Russians and of late also the Israelis do not form a homogenous whole. Their religious, political, or cultural creeds are just as diverse as their individual experiences and values. Once again, the question arises – How do they live and define themselves as Jews in Germany? Do they consciously gravitate toward the above-mentioned sub-cultures and societies-within-society, or are they forced into them by surrounding society? Do some wish to become integrated into the majority mainstream society or do they prefer a parallel society? And the purely rhetorical question remains: Will we ever be able to speak of a common identity for Jews in Germany?

This last and cardinal question can be examined by returning to the suitcase metaphor: What was in the suitcases that these immigrants – regardless whether after 1933, after 1945 or after 1989 – took with them to begin a new life, and in essence, to construct a new identity – beyond the basics (personal documents, clothes, and so forth)?

In 2012, I was in Buenos Aires, where one of the largest Jewish communities outside of Israel is located, with all of the attending similar conflicts within and among its own individual communities. In the course of my sojourn, I visited Roberto Schopflocher, who fled Germany with his parents in 1937 at age 14. As a guest, it was inappropriate to ask directly where he would place himself, and no doubt such a question would not be easy to answer in any case, however, an attempt was made on both scores when I asked him – “How would you describe yourself? As an Argentinean Jew, as an Argentinean Jew with German roots, as

a German Jew in Argentina?” My host gave me a prompt and heartfelt answer, but did so in a very special, deeply culturally rooted manner: His answer was to share with me a poem he had composed about ten years ago, long before he began writing his autobiography, which was published in 2010 in Germany under the title *Weit von Wo – mein Leben zwischen drei Welten* (‘Far from there – my life between three worlds’).<sup>4</sup> Roberto Schopflocher’s “Confession” as he called his poem is, in the subtext, an avowal and a clear statement of his identity.

#### **GESTÄNDNIS (Robert Schopflocher)**

Seit über sechzig Jahren  
in Argentinien,  
aber beim Wort ‚Baum‘  
fällt mir zunächst und noch immer  
die Dorflinde Rannas ein,  
in der Fränkischen Schweiz,  
gelegentlich auch eine Eiche  
oder ein deutscher Tannenbaum;  
nie dagegen oder doch nur selten  
ein Ombú der Pampa,  
ein Paráiso in Entre Ríos  
ein Ñandubay, Lapacho, oder ein Algarrobo,  
wie sich’s doch geziemen würde  
schon aus Dankbarkeit  
dem lebensrettenden Land gegenüber.  
Aber ‚Frühling‘ bedeutet mir noch immer  
Mörikes blau flatterndes Band.  
Schiller, Goethe und die Romantik,  
Jugendstil, Bauhaus und Expressionismus,  
prägten mir ihren Siegel auf,  
nicht weniger wie der deutsche Wald,  
der deutsche Professor  
oder der jüdische Religionsunterricht –  
wohlgemerkt: der der letzten Zwanziger-,  
der ersten Dreißigerjahre.  
Ja, selbst der fragwürdige Struwwelpeter  
Karl May Hauff die Grimm’schen Märchen  
oder Max und Moritz, diese beiden,  
rumoren weiter in mir  
und lassen sich nicht ausrotten.  
Nun ja: Leider! Trotz alledem.  
Oder etwa Gottseidank?  
Und wo liegt es nun, mein Vaterland?<sup>5</sup>

#### **CONFESSION**

In Argentina  
for more than sixty years  
but the word “tree”  
still means to me first and always  
the village linden in Ranna  
in Franconian Switzerland  
sometimes an oak tree as well  
or a German pine  
but never or hardly ever  
an ombú from the pampa  
a paráiso in Entre Ríos  
Ñandubay, Lapacho, or Algarrobo  
when it would be the thing to do  
just out of gratitude  
to the country that saved our lives.  
But “spring” still means to me  
Mörike’s blue waving ribbon.  
Schiller, Goethe and Romanticism,  
Art Nouveau, Bauhaus and Expressionism  
impressed their stamp on me  
no less than the German forest,  
the German professor  
or the Jewish religion lessons-  
please note: those of the late 20’s  
the first years of the 30’s.  
Yes, even the dubious Struwwelpeter  
Karl May Hauff Grimm’s fairy tales  
or Max and Moritz, these two,  
are still knocking around in me  
and won’t be exterminated.  
And so – it’s a shame. Despite everything.  
Or maybe thank God?  
Any where is it anyway, my homeland?

<sup>4</sup> Schopflocher, *Weit von Wo*, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Schopflocher, *Hintergedanken*, 2012, p. 33.



Why am I presenting this ‘confession’ or ‘avowal’ of Schopflocher’s? He has been living in Argentina for more than 75 years, married there to a Jewish woman of German background, had two sons he raised in three cultures – the Argentinean, the Jewish, and the German. He actively participates in Jewish community life in Buenos Aires (in a Liberal German-speaking community it should be noted, where up until a few years ago, the services were conducted in German) and yet he still seems to be living in three worlds and has not found his home in ‘just one.’

Are there not parallels to be found between Schopflocher’s experience and the histories and life plans of those Jews living in Germany today? Schopflocher’s cultural as well as his religious socialization took place in Germany, he came to Argentina as a teenager, became fluent in Spanish, went to university and then, due to external circumstances, worked in a profession that did not suit him very well (in agriculture). He lived in a political system that did not correspond to his convictions and still, he adapted himself to this life, this country which offered him and his family shelter and also offered him the possibility to shape his life for himself, where he could find and keep his disparate identities. Yet herein may lie the crux of a parallel between Schopflocher and a Ukrainian, Latvian, Muscovite, or Leningrader of the same age. They both define themselves over the course of their lives through different horizons of experience, which are reflected in their different perceptions and cultural codes. Take, for example, the commemorative realm of memorial culture: While Roberto Schopflocher thinks of November 9, 1938 (*Kristallnacht*) as one of the most significant dates in German-Jewish relations, for Ukrainian, Russian or Lithuanian Jews in Berlin, Leipzig or Munich the most significant date is May 9, 1945 (‘Victory Day’ in the Soviet Union or VE Day in the west, marking the unconditional surrender of Germany, ending the Second World War in Europe) – a date celebrated annually in Russia and among Russian émigrés elsewhere – even in Germany, with veterans proudly wearing their Red Army campaign medals and decorations.

What insights about the complexities of self-ascription and collective memory can we derive from the above? How is personal and collective memory constructed? Jan Assmann wrote: “When a person – and a society - is only able to remember that in the past which can be reconstructed within the frame of reference of the present at hand, then exactly that will be forgotten, which no longer has a frame of reference in that present.”<sup>6</sup>

Assmann’s definition above (of the hypothesis formulated by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs already in 1925) suggests we have different memories based on different frames of reference and horizons of experience which stand next to one another, but are mutually almost incomprehensible. Only with great diffi-

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<sup>6</sup> Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 2007, p. 36.

culty can a common, collective memory be created from this mix. Therefore, what is important here is that all sides are willing to accept the frame of reference of the others and not to exclude or discount it.

Jews from the former Soviet Union make no secret of their unique view on Jewish history and heritage, linked closely to the experiences of their own families. They are fully aware of the fact that Eastern European Jewry, at the end of the nineteenth century still the largest Jewish center worldwide, has been constantly eroded over the past 130 years.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of their suffering under the Tsar, the Bolshevik revolution, the civil war that followed and decades of Communist suppression, at least some Russian Jews never separated themselves from non-Jewish Russian culture. On the contrary, some years ago, Michail Rumer-Sarajew, second editor-in-chief of the Russian language monthly *Evreyskaya Gazeta* (Jewish Paper) in Berlin, reflected this when he described “the wedlock between the Jewish intellectual passion and articulateness and the Russian spiritual peculiarity has developed – in its best variants – into a bond of mighty power and exquisite potential.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, for Rumer-Sarajew and his relatives and friends, there is a bonus in continuing to live in several cultures – a Jewish and a Russian legacy. In Germany, their chosen country of destination, a third culture with its own codes, priorities and values is introduced to the equation, but the already internalized ‘home cultures’ persevered and imparted through the family, is not abandoned. Sociologists speak here not only of “cultural self-assertion”, but also of the formulation of “additive identities”. Moreover, some Russian-Jewish immigrants understand integration not just as one-sided efforts of acculturation or even an *obligation* to assimilate; rather, they view it as a mutual cultural learning process.

This includes the imparting of one’s own cultural experiences to the German public space and non-Russian audiences. For example, in several German cities where Russian Jews have settled in great numbers, émigrés have established open amateur theaters – much in the way the Geshet Theater in Tel Aviv-Yaffo operates, albeit rarely with the same professional success as the Israeli endeavor: These theatres perform bilingual (i.e. with simultaneous translation) dramas and comedies, targeting a Jewish and non-Jewish, Russian and German audience at the same time. A prime example is the Rossiskaya Aktyorskaya Shkola, founded in 1995 on the campus of Bremen University by the former Muscovite theatrical director Semjon Arkadjevitsch Barkan (born in 1916). At the time, Barkan was

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7 At the end of the nineteenth century the Jewish population in Eastern Europe (especially Poland and Russia) numbered about five million, see: Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence*, 1988, p. 3. Today, less than a tenth of this former Jewish population lives there.

8 Rumer-Sarajew, *Evreyskaya Gazeta*, 2005, p. 188.

already 79 years old. The theater successfully performed classic Russian plays and Jewish dramas and brought together amateur actors from the Jewish community, German ethnic repatriates (*Aussiedler*) and German students. The Bremen Jewish Community, realizing the significance and advantages of Barkan's work, provided rooms for performances, food for rehearsal breaks and for trips, and sometimes even organized actors' costumes. Without a doubt, the *Rossiskaya Aktyorskaya Shkola* makes integration a living reality.

Some historians and sociologists compare today's Russian Jewish émigrés – regardless whether they immigrated to Israel, North America, or Germany, and the German Jews (*Yeckes*) who emigrated to Palestine throughout the 1930s. Both hold a deep belief in the superiority of 'their' own culture, doggedly maintaining Russian/German in private conversation and émigré print media, upholding and promoting outstanding Russian/German artistic heritage (literature, music) and strengthening their own informal networks. Such structures of opportunity are, of course, viable only where Jews (and/or other migrant groups) resettle in greater numbers.

The question remains how the émigrés will affect Jewish life in their countries of destination? Within our research project "German Jewish Cultural Heritage Worldwide" we often note how exiled German Jews of the 1930s who were religious or strongly connected to Jewish tradition, often were eager to join or even to establish *Liberal* (i.e. Reform) Jewish communities. In other words, they not only brought with them their dresses and 'signature' suit jackets (*yecke* in German), their books shelves, gramophones and musical instruments, but also their prayers and ideas on how Jewish liturgy should be shaped.

For today's Russian Jewish immigrants, finding their individual connection to Jewish religion and tradition appears to be a much greater challenge. Many of the middle-aged and elderly appreciate community life, and love to see their kids and grandchildren in the synagogue. Nevertheless, they find it difficult to reconnect with the roots of Judaism themselves. A distinct minority describe themselves as religious, in larger towns often joining new Orthodox centers affiliated with Chabad and of the Lauder Foundation. Others have long been reaching out to other population groups in Germany. For example, Gregori Pantijelew, a former Russian musicologist, is busy as a lecturer on Eastern European music history and sometimes conducts music in Bremen, as well. He has also initiated an intercultural working group that brings together non-Jewish Germans, German Jews, and immigrants devoted to overcoming mutual (cultural) prejudices and enhancing acceptance of otherness, but also reworking the past. As Pantijelew stresses, this involves "deal[ing] with the German history – and that's why the participation of descendants of former offenders and former victims [under the Nazis] is so

important. We mainly work according to the TRT [To-Reflect-and-Trust] method of Israeli psychology professor Dan Bar-On.”<sup>9</sup>

Not only the German-Jewish émigrés from the 1930s but also Russian-Jewish newcomers from the 1990s have unpacked their suitcases. Very few return to their former homeland or have opted in favour of a second emigration. It seems that the second generation of immigrants will be able to participate in Germany’s society with great success. Thus, German-born American Michael Blumenthal, head of the Jewish Museum in Berlin, prophesized that one must take the long view regarding the future for this new group of immigrants:

I am convinced that the young generation of Russian Jews – those who are studying now – will go their way in Germany. In 10 to 15 years, some of them will have a seat in the Bundestag [the German parliament], others will be university professors, others successful entrepreneurs and artists. But I think it still needs a little bit of time.<sup>10</sup>

A much more intriguing issue is how the young Russian Jews will adopt and *live* German, Russian, and Jewish culture and what this will mean for the future of the Jewish communities in the long run. In any case, some of these young writers, artists, and intellectuals are *already* dealing with their Jewish heritage parallel to becoming involved in general social issues, understanding themselves as part of Germany’s increasingly multicultural society. Thus, there are startling examples of a cultural synthesis – particularly among young Jews, who meanwhile belong to the fourth generation. For example, Lena Gorelik, born in Leningrad (St. Petersburg) in 1981, came with her family to Germany as a Russian-Jewish contingent refugee in 1992. She went to school in Munich and trained to be a journalist at the German School of Journalism before earning a degree in Eastern European Studies at the Ludwig Maximilian University. In 2004, she published her first novel *Meine weißen Nächte* (‘My White Nights’) and three more novels have followed. In 2013 a collection of essays was released entitled „*Sie können aber gut Deutsch!*“ *Warum ich nicht mehr dankbar sein will, dass ich hier leben darf, und Toleranz nicht weiterhilft* (“‘You really speak an excellent German!’ Why I no longer want to be grateful for being allowed to live here and why tolerance doesn’t help’). The provocative statement within the title is meant to be an answer to the incessantly asked question – How does it feel to be ‘Jewish’ and ‘a refugee’ in Germany. In a recent interview Gorelik commented on her “Jewishness”:

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<sup>9</sup> Regarding TRT (“To Reflect-and-Trust”) method developed by Dan Bar-On see: Bar-On, Die „Anderen“, 2003; regarding the cultural initiatives organized by Gregori Pantijelew see: Glöckner, *Immigrated Russian Jewish Elites*, 2011, pp. 245 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Blumenthal, in: *Jüdische Zeitung*, April 2006.

In Germany it's something that I have to deal with, but not because it's something I want to do, but because I'm made to do it. For me personally, being Jewish is a feeling. This includes a certain sense of humor and takes on life. I'm happy when I hear Jewish music or read Jewish literature. For me it's less something religious.

She emphasizes that she wrote her current book “about people” in Germany:

about people who live in this country, have some kind of influence on it, enrich it, confuse it, and ultimately make it into what it is. Because, after we have finally discovered several decades too late that we have already been an immigrant nation for a long time, and the debate (because we Germans love debates!) on what it means that we missed that happening and are now really busy inviting ‘fellow citizens of Turkish origin who have arrived in society’ to political talk shows and integration alliances so that they can finally tell us once and for all how they could integrate themselves and people like them in our non-defined and probably also indefinable German society, we've forgotten that we're really talking about people.<sup>11</sup>

The future will show if in three or four more generations Jews will be living in Germany in one or more worlds, or, as Lena Gorelik has already pointedly defined, whether “those fellow citizens of Turkish origin who have arrived in society” will finally tell “us Germans” how “they and people like them can integrate” into “our” German society.

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<sup>11</sup> Gorelik, ‚Sie können aber gut Deutsch!‘, 2012, p. 12.

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